

THE NAME AND FAMILY
OF

ERWIN, IRWIN

ROOTS RESEARCH BUREAU, LTD.

Business Office
39 West 32 Street
Suite 704
New York, NY 10001

Manuscript Number 884

Copyright 1984 Roots Research Bureau, Ltd.
All Rights Reserved

THE NAME AND FAMILY OF ERWIN

The name of ERWIN or IRWIN is believed to have been derived from the ancient Celto-Scythick word Erin-Viene or Erin-Wiene, meaning "a true or brave Westland man." It is found on ancient English and early American records in the various forms of Urwin, Urwen, Irwyne, Irwyn, Erwing, Erwyne, Erwyn, Erwine, Irrwin, Irrwing, Irveyn, Irvyng, Irvyn, Irrwyn, Erving, Irvin, Irvine, Irving, Irwin, Erwin, and others, many of which are still in more or less general use.

It is said that the early ancestors of the family were settled in that part of Scotland anciently called Albin or Albion, under the name of Erinvine, until the Albion Scots were banished by the Romans about the year 373 A.D. They returned to their lands in the year 404, and one branch lived in Albi(o)n for many centuries without further change of location, while another branch went into Ireland about 503 A.D.

One Crine or Crinus Eryvine married Beatrix, eldest

daughter of King Malcolm the Second of Scotland, about 1004, and through his son, Duncan, were descended all the Kings of Scotland until John Baliol, 1285, with the exception of the usurper Macbeth.

A brother of Crinus Eryvine made his home in Ayrshire, then called Cunningham, and is said to have been the builder of the famous old Bonshaw Tower in the late tenth century. Many others of the name were situated in Dumfriesshire and at Drum, in Aberdeenshire.

One of the most ancient lines of the name was that represented before 1260 by one Irwyn (also recorded as Irwin and Irvine) of Bonshaw, County Dumfries, Scotland, who was the father of William de Irwyn of Drum, in Aberdeenshire, who was the father of William or Alexander, who married a daughter of Sir Robert Keith and was the father of Alexander, who was the father of Alexander, Robert, and Agnes, of whom the first married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Robert Keith, and was the father of Alexander, who was the father of another Alexander, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander, first Lord Forbes, and had issue by her of Alexander, Richard, Henry, and Elizabeth, of whom the first was the father of Alexander, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander Ogilvy, Laird of Finlater, and had issue by her of Alexander, William, Robert, Janet, Elizabeth, Gilbert,

James, Margaret, and John, of whom the son Alexander married the Lady Elizabeth Keith, daughter of William, fourth Earl Marischal, and was the father by her of Alexander, Robert, James, William, and others, of whom the first married the Lady Marion Douglas, daughter of the fourth Earl of Buchan, and was the father of Alexander, Robert, and others, of whom the first was married in 1617 to Magdalen, daughter of Sir John Scrimgeour, and was the father of Alexander, Robert, James, Charles, Francis, and numerous daughters, of whom the son Alexander was the father of Alexander, Robert, Charles, and others.

Christopher Irving of the Bonshaw line fell in the Battle of Flodden Field in 1513 and was succeeded as chief of his clan by his son William. One Robert Irwin of Bonshaw is on record as having gone into England in 1517; and Dick and John Irwen or Irwin played stormy parts in the history of Scotland about the year 1528. At a slightly later date, about 1550, two others of the family, recorded as Edward and David "Irrewine," were engaged in the constant warfare in which the Scotland of that time was embroiled.

The Irish family of the name was descended from a younger branch of the Bonshaw line, the original Irish Irving or Irwin being a grandson of Christopher of Bonshaw. This branch located at Oran and was represented in 1626 by

Robert Irwin, who had a son named Garrett.

Among the first of the name in America were George Erwin, who settled in New Norfolk County, Va., in 1640; William Irwin, who settled in Virginia in 1642; and Edward Erwin of Dover, N.H., in 1658. The records of the immediate families and descendants of these early immigrants are not, however, in evidence.

In 1720 George Erwin came from Queenstown, Ireland, to Boston, Mass., whence he later removed to Brimfield, in the same colony. He was the father of at least one child, named Jane, and probably had numerous others whose names are not in evidence.

John Erwin or Erving (whose descendants used both forms of the name) settled at Boston, Mass., about 1725 and was the father there by his wife, Abigail Philips, of Abigail (died young), John, Mary, Elizabeth, Abigail, William, James, Sarah, and Ann.

About 1740 an Edward Erwin or Irwin settled in Augusta County, Va. By his wife Frances he had six sons, John, Robert, Andrew, Edward, Benjamin, and Francis, and two daughters, whose names are not given.

Of the sons of the immigrant Edward, John married Jean William and was the father by her of Edward, Benjamin, Samuel, Andrew, John, William, Jean, Margaret, Mary, Frances, and Francis; Robert married Ann Crockett and was

the father of Robert, Benjamin, Edward, Jonas, Joseph, and Hannah; Andrew left issue by his wife Ann of a son named Francis; Edward married Mary Curry and was the father by her of William, James, Joseph, and Jane or Jean; Benjamin is believed to have removed to North Carolina and to have left a son named Joseph; and Francis married Jane Curry and had issue by her of John, William, Francis, Mary, Jean, Susannah, and Frances.

About 1740 two brothers of the name of Irwin are said to have come from Ireland to America. One of these settled in Orange County, N.Y., and was the father of, probably among others, a son named James.

James Irwin or Erwin, a Scotch-Irishman, settled in Augusta County, Va., about 1740 and left issue there of John, James, and Benjamin, of whom the first married about 1767 Margaret MacFarlane, by whom he was the father of James, Elizabeth, John, Isaac, Joseph, Benjamin, Margaret, George, and Hannah.

Another James Irwin settled at Conococheague, Pa., about the middle of the eighteenth century and was the father there of Joseph, James, Archibald, Elizabeth, Martha, and others, of whom the son Archibald married Jean McDowell and was the father by her of James, Mary, Nancy, Jane, Elizabeth, Margaret, Archibald Jr., and John.

Richard Irwin came to Chester County, Pa., from

County Armagh, North Ireland, in 1764 and was the son of David Irwin and his wife, Margaret Berry. In that year the immigrant Richard married Ann Steele, by whom he had issue of Samuel, David, John, James, Margaret, Ninian, Elizabeth, Robert, Richard, and Joseph.

Of these sons of the immigrant Richard of Chester County, Samuel was the father by his wife, Jane Miller, of Richard, Fanny, Samuel, Ann, John, William, Eliza, and Jane; James was married in 1793 to Mary Stewart, by whom he had issue of James, Margaret, Elizabeth, Andrew, Richard, and Mary; Ninian married Frances Graham and had Richard, James, Ninian, Ann, William, and Catherine; Robert was the father in Harrison County, Ohio, by his wife, a Miss Aull, of four children, Richard, Ninian, Mary Ann, and Catherine; Richard was the father by his wife, Nancy Miller, of Fanny, Robert, Ann, Jane, Eliza, Samuel, and Adeline; and Joseph married a Miss Knight and was the father of two sons, William and Richard.

About 1765 Colonel Arthur Erwin and his brother William came to Philadelphia from Ireland. Colonel Arthur was the father by his first wife, Mary Scott, of John, Joseph, William, Sarah, Francis, Arthur, and Hugh and by his second wife, Mary Kennedy, of Samuel, Mary, Rebecca, John, and others.

In 1775 Robert and Sarah Irwin and their infant

son, Robert, came to America and settled first in Pennsylvania, whence they later removed to Wisconsin. The younger Robert married Catherine Singer and was the father by her of Robert, Alexander, James, Samuel, Elizabeth, Mary, Jane, and Catherine.

Jared Irwin or Erwin of Ireland came to Romney, Va., about 1779. By his wife, Jane Kennedy, he was the father of at least one son, named Jared, who married Eleanor Taylor in 1798 and was the father by her of William Taylor and others.

Dr. Joseph Irwin, a native of Ireland, came to Harrisburg, Pa., before 1802 and removed in that year to Woodstock, Va., where he left issue of, among others, Dr. Joseph Swift Irwin.

John Erwin or Irwin (son of William Irvine and his wife, Jane Nelson, of Fermanagh, Ireland) settled in Chester, Pa., and married Jean Mayne, by whom he was the father of William, John, Asbey, Samuel, Mary, Jane Nelson, Ellen, Annie, and Lizzie.

The descendants of these and other branches of the family in America have spread into practically every State of the Union and have contributed to its growth and development. They have been characterized in general as stout-hearted, strong-minded, austere, and often strong-tempered leaders in military and political affairs and in

the more arduous professions.

Among those of the name who served as officers in the War of the Revolution were Lieutenant Colonel Henry Irwin, of North Carolina; Colonel John Irwin, of North Carolina; Captains John, Joseph, and Matthew Irwin, of Pennsylvania; Captain John Lawson Irwin, of Georgia; Lieutenant Gerard Irwin, of Pennsylvania; Colonel Arthur Erwin, of Pennsylvania; Surgeon David Erwin, of New Jersey; Ensign James Erwin, of Pennsylvania; Lieutenant James Erwin, of South Carolina; Lieutenant John Erwin, of Pennsylvania; Colonel John Erwin, of South Carolina; and Captain Joseph Erwin, of Pennsylvania.

John, Alexander, Joseph, William, Samuel, Richard, Robert, Charles, Francis, Benjamin, George, Arthur, and James are some of the Christian names most favored by the family for its male progeny.

A few of the many bearers of the name who have distinguished themselves in America in more recent times are:

William Wallace Irwin (1803-1856), of Pennsylvania, lawyer, mayor of Pittsburgh, and Congressman.

Alexander R. Erwin (1820-1860), of Louisiana and Alabama, clergyman, educator, and college president.

Bernard John Dowling Irwin (1830-1917), surgeon, military officer, and veteran of the Indian and Civil Wars.

Robert Wesley Erwin (b. 1842), of Ohio, military officer, physician, and surgeon.

Daniel Peart Erwin (b. 1844), of Pennsylvania, merchant.

Harvey Samuel Irwin (1844-1916), of Ohio, lawyer, Union officer in the Civil War, and Congressman from Kentucky.

George LeRoy Irwin (1868-1931), of Michigan, brigadier general in the World War.

Edward Michael Irwin (b. 1873), of Missouri, Physician and Congressman from Illinois.

William Henry Irwin (b. 1873), of New York, author and journalist.

Wallace Irwin (b. 1876), of New York, journalist and author.

The Irwin coat of arms used by the American branches, descended from John Irwin, who served in the Parliamentary Army under Cromwell and settled in Ireland, also used by the Irvine family of Bonshaw, Scotland, is described as follows (Burke, Encyclopaedia of Heraldry, 1844; Matthews, American Armoury and Blue Book:

Arms.--"Argent, three holly leaves slipped vert."

Crest.--"A hand issuing out of a cloud grasping a branch of thistle proper."

Motto.--"Nemo me impune lacessit."

The coat of arms of the Erwin family of Ireland, is described as follows (Burke, Encyclopaedia of Heraldry, 1851):

Arms.--"Quarterly, first and fourth, argent a heart regally crowned proper on a chief azure three

mullets of the first; second and third, argent three piles in chief gules thereon two mullets of the field, all within a bordure azure."

Crest.--"On a mount vert, a tree proper, chained thereto a boar passant or, collar, chain and padlock, all steel."

Motto.--"Lock sicker."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bardsley. English and Welsh Surnames. 1901.
 Douglas Wimberley. A Short Account of the Family of Irvine of Drum. 1893.
 J. F. Leslie. The Irvines of Drum and Collateral Branches. 1909.
 Burke. History of the Commoners. 1835-1836.
 Burke. Landed Gentry. 1875.
 Burke. General Armory. 1884.
 Greer. Early Virginia Immigrants. 1912.
 Savage. Genealogical Dictionary of New England. 1860.
 Bolton. Immigrants to New England, 1700-1775. 1931.
 New York Genealogical and Biographical Record. Vol. 30. 1899.
 Morris. Irvins, Doaks, Logans, and McCampbells of Kentucky and Virginia. 1916.
 J. B. Irving. The Irvings, Irwins, Irvines, or Erinveines. 1907.
 Morton. History of Rockbridge County, Va. 1920.
 Munsell. American Ancestry. Vol. 8. 1893.
 William and Mary Quarterly. Vol. 20. 1911-1912.
 Paull. The Paull-Irwin Family. 1935.
 Virkus. Abridged Compendium of American Biography. Vol. 2. 1926.
 Tyler. Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography. Vol. 5. 1915.
 McDowell. McDowells and Connections. 1918.
 Martin. History of Chester, Pa. 1877.
 Keith. Benjamin Harrison Ancestry. 1893.
 S. D. Irwin. Richard Irwin of Chester County, Pa. 1893.
 Heitman. Officers of the Continental Army.

1914.
The Encyclopedia Americana. 1932.
Herringshaw. American Biography. 1909.